

Message Text

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47

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMB AOY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4003

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: CHURCH FIGURES CRITICIZE GOVT

1. WHILE CHIEF FIGURES IN CHURCH HAVE BEFORE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER VIOLENCE AND DETERIORATING SITUATION IN ARGENTINA, BLAST AGAINST GOVT LOOSED LAST WEEK BY MONSIGNOR ANTONIO PLAZA, BISHOP OF LA PLATA, WAS UNPRECEDENTED--STRONGER EVEN THAN OCT STATEMENT OF ARMY CHAPLAIN VICTORIO BONAMIN. PLAZA WARNED THAT ARGENTINA IS IN STATE OF DISINTEGRATION, LARGELY BECAUSE OF DRIFTING, IMPOTENT GOVT WHICH SETS BAD EXAMPLE. CRIME AND TERRORISM, HE SAID, ARE BUT THE RESULTS OF THE GOVT'S OWN "INSTITUTIONALIZED IMMORALITY."

2. PLAZA STATEMENT CLEARLY STUNG GOVT. ON DEC 31 FONMIN ARAUZ CASTEX TOOK THE UNUSUAL STEP OF CALLING IN THE PAPAL NUNCIO TO PROTEST.

3. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE GOVT'S PROTEST, ANOTHER BISHOP, MONSIGNOR VICENTE ZAZPE OF SANTA FE, CRITICIZED THE GOVT FOR CONDONING QUASI-OFFICIAL TERRORISM--READ, THE AAA.

4. MONSIGNOR PLAZA'S STATEMENT IS ALL THE MORE SIGNIFICANT IN THAT HE HAS LONG BEEN REGARDED AS THE MOST PRO-PERONIST OF ARGENTINE BISHOPS.

5. COMMENT: THE STATEMENTS OF THESE AND OTHER BISHOPS
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CRITICAL OF GOVT APPEAR TO BE SPONTANEOUS AND NOT RESULT

OF A CONCERTED CAMPAIGN ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH
AS A WHOLE. EVEN SO, THEY REFLECT A VIEW WHICH IS
PREVALENT WITHIN THE HIERARCHY, AND IT IS THEREFORE
UNLIKELY THAT THE GOVT PROTEST TO THE PAPAL NUNCIO WILL
PRODUCE ANY RETRACTIONS.
HILL

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